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INTERIOR DAILY COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

TV Hit:

[Fox Business - Varney and Co: Secretary Zinke talks Monuments and More](#)

NEWS TO SHARE:

[The HILL: Senate confirms two Interior, EPA nominees](#)

"The Senate on Thursday confirmed two of President Trump's environmental nominees. Joe Balash was confirmed as assistant secretary for land and minerals management at the Interior Department, and Susan Bodine was confirmed to lead the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, which oversees enforcement of pollution laws. Senators voted 61-38 to confirm Balash, a former Department of Natural Resources commissioner in Alaska, and he will serve as one of five assistant secretaries at Interior, overseeing land management and resource development issues."

[National Review- Opinion: President Trump's Courageous Decision to Shrink Utah Monuments Places Principle Ahead of Politics](#)

"President Trump's decision to shrink the two Utah monuments, which are bigger than all five of the state's national parks combined, indicates that he is serious about squaring the use of the Antiquities Act with the intent of the Congress that passed it. Reducing the monuments, then, is the right decision, and a courageous one at that. Activist groups at the national level frequently point to special-interest opinion polls suggesting that most Americans oppose downsizing Bears Ears and Grand Staircase. It may surprise some, but I could concede that point. President Trump may not be doing himself any favors with the national electorate."

CORRECTING THE RECORD:

[Politico: Zinke booked government helicopters to attend D.C. events](#)

"Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke spent more than \$14,000 on government helicopters this summer to take himself and staff to and from official events near Washington, D.C., in order to accommodate his attendance at a swearing-in ceremony for his replacement in Congress and a horseback ride with Vice President Mike Pence, according to previously undisclosed official travel documents. The travel logs, released to POLITICO via a Freedom of Information Act request, show Zinke using taxpayer-funded vehicles from the U.S. Park Police to help accommodate his political events schedule."

- **DOI Statement:** "It's complete garbage and yellow journalism at its worst. After a congressional hearing, the Secretary attended an official Congressional event with the Congressman from Montana and the Speaker of the House before going to an emergency management briefing. On the other occasion he did an aerial survey of a power line corridor, which was pending before the Department, while traveling back from meetings in southern Virginia in order to get to a meeting with the Vice President."

[U.S. News and World Report: President Trump's National Monument Cuts Draw 5th Lawsuit](#)

“Another coalition of conservation groups is suing to stop President Donald Trump’s cuts to Bears Ears National Monument in Utah. The lawsuit filed Thursday by 11 organizations including the Sierra Club is the fifth legal challenge to Trump’s reductions to Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments. It is the third lawsuit focused on Bears Ears, which has land considered sacred to a coalition of Native American tribes. The complaint echoes arguments made in the two previous Bears Ears lawsuits, claiming that Trump exceeded his power and jeopardized protections for “irreplaceable archaeological sites.” Past presidents have trimmed national monuments 18 times, but there’s never been a court ruling about whether the 1906 Antiquities Act — which allows presidents to create a monument — also lets them reduce one.”

- ****LINK TO WHITE HOUSE TALKING POINTS ON MONUMENT REPORT****

OTHER TOP STORIES:

The HILL: ‘Largest ever’ drilling lease sale in Alaska yields few bids

“A lease sale for oil and gas drilling rights in Alaska — deemed the largest there by the Trump administration — produced bids for only seven tracts of land and garnered only \$1.16 million in revenue, officials announced late Wednesday. The Bureau of Land Management auctioned 900 tracts of land in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, totaling 10.3 million acres, for oil and gas drilling rights this week. But only two companies bid, securing drilling rights for seven tracts of land — or less than 1 percent of that offered — for only \$1.16 million, Reuters reports.”

Reuters: U.S. delays rule on methane emissions from federal lands

“The Trump administration will delay an Obama-era rule limiting emissions of the powerful greenhouse gas methane from oil and gas operations on federal and tribal lands, it said on Thursday, a move slammed by environmentalists. The Bureau of Land Management, an office of the Department of Interior, will officially suspend the rule on Friday to “avoid imposing likely considerable and immediate compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future,” it said in a document to be published on Friday.”

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